

Does Russia Need “Universal” Values?

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The system of traditional Russian values, which formed over centuries, serves as the spiritual and moral foundation of our society. This system was at the basis of the Soviet people’s victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945, which was of global historical importance. This very foundation allows us to protect and strengthen sovereignty and to build the

future regardless of all the difficulties and contradictions of historical development ... The values of our multiethnic and multireligious society should be protected from the aggressive promotion of values of the neoliberal trend which in many respects contradict the very essence of our perception of the world and are being actively imposed by our geopolitical opponents in the fight for influence



on the development of civilization and their dominance in the world ... We usually refer to values that are not inherent in our Russian society and that are dominant in foreign culture as “Western values.” ... It must be noted that some European values, for instance, an eight-hour working day, equality between women and men, or women’s electoral rights appeared solely thanks to the events that took place in Russia in 1917 ... In the social sphere, neoliberalism imposes individualism, egoism, the cult of pleasure, unrestrained consumption, and absolutizes the freedom of any self-expression ... It is no longer about replacing some values with others. We should talk about the emergence of a new ideological system that ultimately aims to destroy any traditional religious and spiritual-moral values as the fundamental basis for the cultural and political sovereignty of countries and nations ... New Western values have turned into the imposition of an alien worldview on the planet. The ideologues of the West put whole countries and nations before a choice—either you accept “universal values” or your values will be wrong and immoral ... Thus, any attempts to standardize Russian or other values under the officially accepted “universal” ones are a manifestation of sociocultural aggression aimed at destroying traditional value systems in a particular state. The impact of these norms on the international security system has been equally devastating. Replacing international norms with the law of the strong, with fire and sword, imposing “freedom and democracy” where they cannot exist in such a Western sense, by definition, due to historical, religious, ethnological, and other reasons, has already led to the tragedies of Iraq, Syria, and Libya. A separate shameful page of history for all NATO countries was and will always remain the barbaric bombing of Yugoslavia.

An offensive is being conducted on “all fronts” of this “hybrid” war. The direction of the main blow was chosen to blur the traditions of various peoples that have developed over the centuries, their language, faith, and historical memory of generations. Such norms and values cannot be accepted by the multiethnic Russian nation under any circumstances. Against this background, the question of what Russia offers the world in return is very

important. In contrast to the West, Russia, in fact, offers a new civilizational choice, the content of which includes equality, justice, noninterference in internal affairs, and the absence of a mentoring tone and any preconditions for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Russia proposes that national sovereignty, including cultural and spiritual and moral sovereignty, be elevated to the status of the greatest value and the basis for the subsequent construction of human civilization. There is no doubt that the number of followers of such a choice in the world will grow, creating more and more favorable conditions for the development and prosperity of different countries and nations. ■

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For commentary and more detail, see “The Kremlin’s Critique of Western Values,” Foreign Military Studies Office, *OE Watch*, <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-past-issues/346376>.

Previous page: Secretary of the Security Council Nikolai Patrushev meets with President Vladimir Putin and other permanent members of the Russian Security Council 25 November 2019 in Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region, Russia. Patrushev, secretary since 2008, was a former director of the Russian Federal Security Service and is one of Putin’s most trusted advisors. (Photo courtesy of the Office of the President of Russia)